

## Financial Aid: Overview of Policies

### Policy/Procedure

1. Paying for a college education is primarily a family responsibility. Need-based financial aid is provided as a supplement to the family's contribution. When parents are divorced or separated, the ability of the noncustodial parent to contribute to college costs will be considered as a part of the family's financial strength.
2. Although most Dickinson aid for incoming first year students is based on demonstrated financial need, there are three renewable merit scholarships offered to incoming first year students: the Benjamin Rush, the John Dickinson, and the John Montgomery Scholarships. Several academic prizes are available to upperclassmen. While most of these upperclass prizes provide a nominal financial award, their primary purpose is to recognize superior academic performance at Dickinson.
3. Eligibility for need-based aid is determined on an annual basis. Incoming first year students should file the appropriate forms according to the deadlines established for their category of admission (see deadline information in section 5). Upperclass students should apply no later than April 15 (or earlier if required for a state grant or scholarship). Late applicants are considered for Dickinson grant assistance on a funds-available basis.
4. Estimated state or federal grants are frequently included in entering students' packages. If these grants do not materialize due to program changes, the Dickinson grant will be increased to make up the shortfall. Conversely, if the federal or state grant amount is more than the initial estimated amount, the Dickinson grant will be decreased accordingly. Dickinson will not replace state or federal grants lost due to inaccurate application data or failure to complete the application process on time.
5. Dickinson grant and scholarship funds are available only to full-time, matriculated students. Some federal and state programs may be available for part-time students.
6. The only students recognized as independent from their parents for financial aid purposes are those who meet the federal definition of independent student: students who are over 24 years of age, veterans of the armed forces, orphans or wards of the court, married, or have dependent children for whom they provide over half of the annual support. For Dickinson grant purposes, students who turn 24, marry, or have children after their initial acceptance as dependent students will continue to be treated as dependent on the resources of their parents. This policy reflects our philosophy that the primary responsibility for financing educational expenses rests with the family.
7. In addition to financial aid programs for students, there are several attractive financing systems and payment plans available to parents. Information on the Tuition Management System (TMS) monthly payment plan, parent loans, and student alternative loans is available upon request.

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8. Students admitted as first year students are eligible to receive Dickinson grant or scholarship aid for up to eight semesters of attendance. Transfer students are limited to the number of semesters needed to complete their degrees as determined at the time of enrollment. For example, a student admitted as a first semester sophomore would be eligible to receive aid for six semesters of attendance.
9. Although eligibility is usually based on parental information, the student is the aid recipient. As a result, Financial Aid Office staff members normally direct correspondence to the student rather than to the parents. It is vital that the student understand the financial aid process and take an active role in managing it (see information regarding FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, available on the Dickinson College webpage in the Registrar's Office section).

### Related Information

### History/Revision Information

**Responsible Office/Division:**

**Effective Date:**

**Last Amended Date:**

**Next Review Date:**

**Also Found In:** Information on Policies and Procedures - Financial Aid Office